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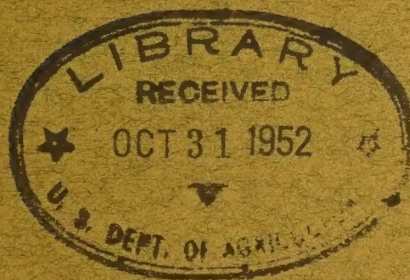
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PROGRESS

at

IRWINVILLE FARMS

A Demonstration by the Farm Security Administration
of the Rapidity of Change that Can be Effected
in Living Standards and Earnings of
Distressed Farm Families.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Security Administration
Region V - Rural Planning Division

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Security Administration
Region V - RP Division

IRWINVILLE FARMS PROJECT
January 2, 1940

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Irwinville Farms is a Farm Security Administration Project with 103 full-time farming units and two subsistence units in Irwin County, in South Georgia. It was started by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in 1935 as a demonstration in the rehabilitation of a financially broken and almost deserted, but one-time prosperous rural community. Dwellings, mule barns, smokehouses, poultry houses, pumphouses and tobacco barns have been constructed and land has been cleared, fenced and terraced on all but 13 units. It is a community type project with a total of 13,207 acres in one tract. The combined acreage in all units is 8,490, there are 4,487 acres of submarginal and swamp land in forest and community pastures, and 230 acres in roads. The principal soil types in the project are Tifton and Norfolk. There are 73 two-horse and 30 one-horse farms on the project.

HISTORY OF IRWINVILLE COMMUNITY:

Irwin County is a part of Georgia ceded to the United States of America in a treaty between Andrew Jackson and the Creek Indians in 1814. The county was organized in 1820. The long leaf pine forest was inhabited by bear, deer, turkey and other wild game. At a later date there were many large herds of cattle in the county, as a result its first Confederate Army unit was named the "Cowboy Company". In 1823 the McDuffie Estate sold 900 head of cattle for \$4,500.

The town of Irwinville (now the project community center) became the county seat in 1830 and was incorporated as a town in 1857. The first courthouse was 24 by 30 feet and cost \$1,500. The county seat was moved from Irwinville to Ocilla in 1910.

Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, was captured a quarter of a mile from Irwinville on May 10, 1865. On his death bed, R. F. Clements, then owner of most of Irwinville project land, requested his son, J. B. Clements, to have the deeds fixed so no Yankee could ever own it. J. B. deeded four acres, including the place where Davis was captured, to the State of Georgia and a monument to Davis was erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy during Governor Eugene Talmadge's administration.

IRWINVILLE SOLD UNDER THE HAMMER:

The Clements plantation of 6,995 acres was foreclosed by the Citizens National Bank of Fitzgerald in 1929 for the amount of the mortgage and \$5,000 in cash. It was sold to the Georgia Rural Rehabilitation Corporation in 1934 for \$57,760, at the same time the Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company tract of 2,725 acres was bought for \$32,772. By 1934 most of the negro plantation families had left Irwinville because of financial distress. The farms were being operated in a small way by the bank and insurance company and mostly by use of day labor. The negro cabins were about to fall down and the old Clements home was about the only house worth repairing. Much of the good farm land had grown up in trees and fences were in rather poor condition.

RELIEF FAMILIES MAKE GOOD AT IRWINVILLE:

The 89 families, all white, now on Irwinville project average 5.6 persons per family. They came from 18 Georgia Counties. Twenty-eight of them came off relief rolls in 1935. The other 61 were either Rural Rehabilitation families or tenant farmers not on Rehabilitation. None of the 89 had any money when they came to the project and with a few exceptions their share of worldly goods consisted of household furniture valued at \$50 to \$200 per family. On January 1, 1939, the average net worth of 47 families who completed "Farm Family Record Books" in 1938 was \$1,066.40.

A four-year record of the 43 relief families who came to the project in the spring of 1935 reveals interesting facts. Only 15 of the 43 have left the project. Eleven left of their own accord and four were moved because they did not fit into the project and the Farm Security Administration program. The average gain in net worth per family for the four-year period was \$909.99 for the 28 families still on the project.

In addition to financial gain these families have made great progress in improved diets, medical care, living conditions and community life. Twelve of these families are now being recommended for "Farm Purchase Contracts". The other project families have made similar progress.

After having been on relief for several months, B. C. Traylor, one of the 28, came to the project with a wife, five children, a cow, 12 hens, some old household furnishings and a dog. His possessions were valued at \$100. After four years on the project his net worth was \$1,841.23 and he owed the Farm Security Administration only \$504.51. His assets were: Cattle, \$415; hogs, \$170; chickens, \$43; mules, \$300; farm machinery, \$126; household furnishings, \$360; feed and seed, \$365; and stored food, \$350, making a total of \$2,129. Mrs Traylor canned 705 quarts of fruits, vegetables and meats for feeding the family in 1940.

DIVERSIFIED FARMING HELPED:

A farm business analysis of "Farm Family Record Books" kept by 28 (not the same 28 discussed above) two-horse farmers in 1938 shows the following total cash sales and the amount received for different crops and livestock:

<u>Crop or Livestock</u>	<u>Total for 28 Farms</u>	<u>Average per Farm</u>
Total Cash Sales	\$21,297.12	\$760.61
Cotton	4,507.38	160.98
Peanuts	4,201.44	150.05
Tobacco	8,266.48	298.23
Watermelons	2,360.40	84.30
Hogs	724.51	25.88
Cattle	499.64	17.84

Sales from livestock were somewhat larger in 1939 and are expected to increase from year to year because the farmers are advancing gradually in this phase of farming.

In 1939 Howard L. Reeves, a two-horse farmer, sold farm products as follows: Tobacco, \$328.60; peanuts, \$259.60; cotton, \$82.59; watermelons, \$80.35; and livestock, \$233.76.

IRWINVILLE FAMILIES LIVE AT HOME:

In 1938 the 83 families canned 26,496, or an average of 319 quarts of fruits and vegetables per family. In 1939 eighty-nine families carried over 2,917 quarts from 1938 and canned 24,287, or an average of 273 quarts per family. An analysis of record books kept on 19 one-horse farms shows \$117 as the average gain in value of food stored in 1938 over that of 1937. The 82 farmers who borrowed money in 1939 borrowed an average of \$37.43 for food purchases and an average of \$10.81 per farm for feed purchases. This is about thirty per cent of what they borrowed their first year on the project. From 1937 to 1938 the 19 families made an average gain of \$131.19 in the value of livestock owned and an average gain of \$83.19 in value of feed on hand (feed was cheaper in 1938 than in 1937). The showing for two-horse farmers was somewhat better.

All families on the project have cows, hogs and chickens sufficient to produce plenty of milk, meat and eggs for the family.

They all have well fenced gardens and most of them keep something growing in them at all times of the year. A home orchard has been set on each unit. The smokehouse is one of the most frequently visited buildings on the farmstead. There is ample food in most of them at all times of the year.

SOIL CONSERVATION:

Each individual farmer has his AAA allotment and plants all crops in accordance with AAA regulations. Velvet beans, hogged off peanuts, crotonaria and cow peas are the chief soil conservation crops. Summer legumes do better than winter legumes. A small permanent pasture has been fenced on each unit and there are two large community pastures on the project. Beginning in 1940 all pastures are to be fertilized and seeded according to recommendations of the Georgia Coastal Plains Experiment Station at Tifton, 17 miles from the project.

FARM PURCHASE CONTRACTS:

Twenty-seven clients are now being recommended for "Farm Purchase Contracts" to be written on Form FSA-LE 107. Their annual payments will be 25 per cent of all cash received from the sale of cotton, peanuts, tobacco, watermelons, truck crops, hogs and cattle. These payments will cover 3 per cent for interest on investments; 1 per cent for overhead expenses; taxes; insurance; maintenance; and, payment on principal. Units will sell for \$2,500 to \$4,500.

THE COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION:

The development of cooperation is one of the major factors in rehabilitation of the Irwinville Community. The Cooperative Association, a corporation organized under Georgia law, is the business unit through which project families purchase their supplies, grade, process and market their products. It is intended that the association provide project families with all goods and services they could expect from a town that would be developed by competitive enterprise at Irwinville.

For purchase, storage and distribution of supplies, the association has a new store, filling station, warehouse, and truck. From these enterprises project families obtain feed, seed, fertilizer, gas, oil, drygoods, clothing, groceries, and all other supplies and equipment needed. For processing and marketing, the association has a new cotton gin, seed house, repair shop, feed and grist mills, peanut picker, tractor and cold storage plant. Any profit made in operating these various functions normally carried on by private enterprise will be returned to members in proportion to their patronage.

Project families are hiring and directing their own employees, planning and budgeting operations of their own business, and thus learning to live in a truly democratic community. They are beginning to specify the types, quality and prices of merchandise and supplies they purchase. They are learning to process, grade and pack their farm products to get better prices in marketing. Through their Cooperative Association they are pooling their purchases and sales to obtain benefits in addition to those ordinarily secured by the individual farmer.

THE HEALTH ASSOCIATION:

The Irwinville Farms Health Association, a voluntary, unincorporated health association, was organized November 1, 1937. The plan provides for a board of directors, elected from the membership.

Membership fee scale is \$18 per year for individuals or couples, and \$30 per year for three or more. This sum provides for general practitioner care in office, home, health center and hospital, as is usually provided by a general medical practitioner, including obstetrical care and surgical service; ward care in Dismuke Hospital at Ocilla, Georgia, for 21 days in any one year for one individual, this to include general nursing care, use of operating room, anaesthesia, X-ray, laboratory work, and ordinary medicines and dressings. The hospital fund provides for emergency hospitalization and hospitalization for chronic defects as Dr. Dismuke deems advisable. The Medical Care and Hospitalization are with one physician. There is no County Medical Association and only two other physicians practice in the county, both being elderly men who are not interested in long distance practice.

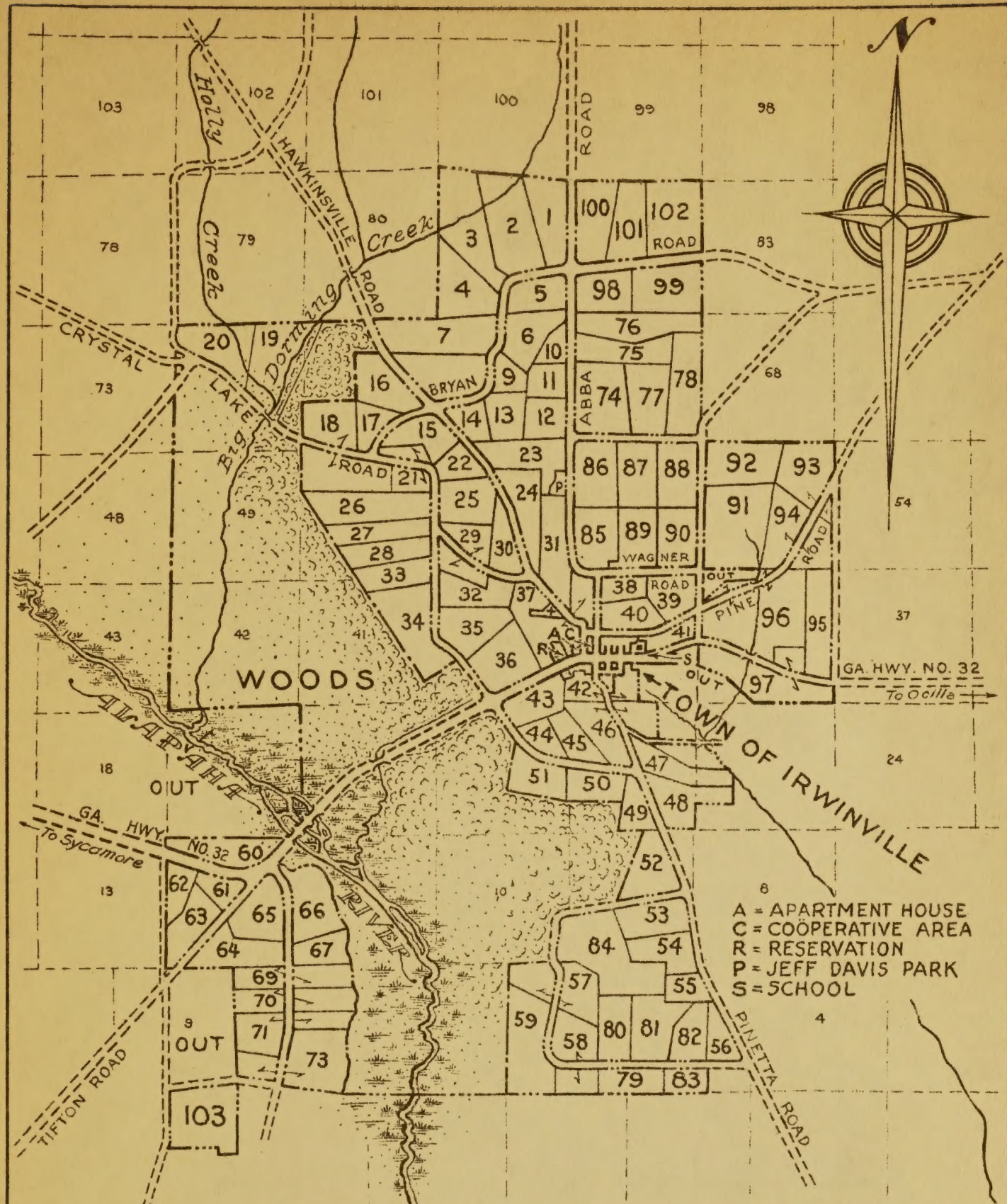
Families are to take advantage of all free services given under any public health program. A residential nurse is employed for the project with emphasis on preventive and educational work rather than bedside nursing. With practically a complete immunization program for the past two years, the general health of the families has decidedly improved.

EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:

The school is operated under the county system. For two years prior to the present school the Regional Office negotiated with the University of Georgia and the State Department of Education to make this a demonstration program in rural education. The first year of such cooperation the University paid the salary of the principal selected by them; the second year, the University placed its cadet teachers on an in-service training program in the school, thus augmenting the teaching staff and curriculum. For the present year they agreed to supplement the salary of the principal and place cadet teachers, provided the county would run a full-term school and make this a junior high school. With the uncertainty of financial aid from the state and the fact that the district tax provided by legislation is not in operation in this district, the county would not and could not meet the terms of the University. Consequently, this year the school is down to a lower level. The principal is an elderly man holding a second-year certificate.

The University promises to again offer its cooperation next year if conditions can be worked out in the county. Until this year the state has provided Vocational Agriculture and Vocational Home Economics teachers even though this is only an elementary school. These were withdrawn this year as the county could not meet their share of the expenses.

The school auditorium is used for an inter-denominational Sunday School and such community activities as take place on the project.



PROJECT NO. RF-GA-15 REGION 5

PROJ. NAME: IRWINVILLE FARMS

LOCATION: IRWIN COUNTY, GEORGIA

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
DISTRICT ENGINEER'S OFFICE
DISTRICT 2 MONTGOMERY, ALA.

TITLE: LOCATION MAP

Surveyed by		Drawn by	FLB.	SCALE 1" = 1 MILE
Checked by	D.W.C.	Traced by	FLB.	PLAN NO. 2002-1
Approved		Date	3-23-39	SHEET NO 1 of 1
Revised		Date		

